Shelter and Settlements Year in Review: A Participatory Workshop

Proceedings from the November 19, 2008 workshop held in Washington, D.C.
Co-hosted by InterAction and USAID/OFDA

NOTE: Please refer to the Appendix of this document for the Workshop Agenda, Opening Remarks, and Handouts. PowerPoint slideshows are available upon request.

Welcome, Agenda, and Housekeeping

Linda Poteat, Director of Disaster Response, InterAction, and Charles A. Setchell, Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor, USAID/OFDA, welcomed participants. Mr. Setchell expressed hope that the workshop would facilitate timely discussion on recent sector work, emerging issues and activities, and the shelter-specific components of USAID/OFDA's new proposal guidelines.

Mr. Setchell noted that participants would discuss several conceptual and operational questions, including: "What is a shelter? How do we define it? When do we know we are providing it? How can we link what we provide to what follows?" USAID/OFDA encourages implementing partners to view shelter as a platform for economic production and recovery rather than merely four walls and a roof. In addition, shelter design can serve as a learning template for disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Review of USAID/OFDA-Funded Shelter and Settlements Projects

Mr. Setchell claimed that shelter is foundational to successful humanitarian assistance. For example, winterization efforts often focus on the provision of blankets, food, water, and medicine, but no amount of these relief items can compensate for a lack of shelter, which is often an overlooked component of winterization efforts.

Mr. Setchell reviewed USAID/OFDA's mandate, disaster response criteria, responses in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, and budget trends since FY 2001. Typically, USAID/OFDA directs approximately 75 percent of total funding to non-governmental organizations. Shelter and Settlements (S&S) activities accounted for approximately six percent of USAID/OFDA's FY 2008 budget and likely benefited up to 850,000 people, although this number might increase once all final reports are submitted. S&S programming was also incorporated into other sectors during FY 2008.

In Peru, the 2007 Pisco earthquake damaged many newer buildings along with older, colonial era buildings, demonstrating that the use of "better," more "modern" materials does not necessarily result in "better" buildings. In addition, residents in Peru used

shelter materials to erect shelters near unsafe structures (e.g., buildings and walls), demonstrating that distributing shelter materials as emergency relief supplies can be dangerous. Shelter design must be context-specific and systematic. In Pisco, spontaneous transitional shelter programs often lacked appreciation of context.

Following Hurricane Sidr in Bangladesh in November 2007, USAID/OFDA revised a basic and well known Grameen Bank shelter design to include wind- and flood-resistant construction measures as part of an effort to develop appropriate, adequate, and well-ventilated shelter. This is a good example of context-specific shelter design and incorporation of DRR measures to enhance structural integrity.

In Burma, following Hurricane Nargis in May 2008, Mr. Setchell observed extensive spontaneous recovery, even in the most-affected villages, testifying to the resilience of subsistence farmers and fishers accustomed to receiving little government aid. Since the hurricane occurred at the onset of the rainy season, many villagers had recently completed repairs and upgrades to their homes in anticipation of wet conditions, which reduced quality material supplies, leaving only lower-quality and salvaged materials available for post-disaster rebuilding. However, rebuilding with available and salvaged materials enabled disaster survivors to reduce construction costs by half, while building Sphere-compliant shelter. The U.N. shelter cluster recommended providing two plastic sheets (tarpaulins) per household as part of a larger response package, in contrast to the common practice of providing one sheet per household. This decision increased both the costs and logistical requirements of the response efforts. Additionally, observers found that many families needed only one sheet. Other families were able to spontaneously rebuild without plastic sheets. The resilience of the Burmese people in the face of hardship challenges the humanitarian community's "assumption-of-need" thinking. In addition, the U.S. military's provision of high-cost and potentially unnecessary relief supplies raised questions about the role of military involvement in disaster relief.

Following the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, the Government of China set up well-organized, high-density tent camps in several locations. However, approximately 75 percent of people affected by the earthquake lived in rural areas and received little government assistance for rebuilding. USAID/OFDA supported a DRR assessment and training effort to help rural residents rebuild with light materials. The program emphasized the need to avoid rebuilding with the same lack of structural reinforcement that caused so many structures to collapse.

USAID/OFDA has provided humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan for several years, including a number of shelter programs in Kabul and other cities. Kabul has been one of the world's most rapidly growing cities in recent years, and its seismic risk equals that of California or Japan. In response to this risk, USAID/OFDA attempts to incorporate DRR elements into shelter design. USAID/OFDA's programs in Kabul also generate significant livelihood opportunities by using local materials, expertise, and craftsmanship.

In the aftermath of the conflict in Georgia, the lack of a coherent international humanitarian shelter strategy recognized by the Government of Georgia (GOG) hindered

efforts to provide appropriate, cost-effective shelter in a timely manner. While USAID/OFDA and others sought to establish humanitarian space to carry out appropriate work, the GOG planned to build several thousand permanent, durable houses in lieu of a focus on providing emergency assistance prior to the onset of winter, a decision that USAID/OFDA and other humanitarian organizations deemed prohibitively expensive and exceedingly difficult to achieve in a timely manner. In addition, the GOG was unable identify how many units would be built, making it difficult for USAID/OFDA and others to fill identified gaps. Thus, GOG actions prevented an efficient and effective allocation of resources. The humanitarian response to the conflict in Georgia raised several important questions, including how USAID/OFDA engages with foreign governments, foreign and U.S. militaries, and other U.S. Government (USG) agencies.

Finally, the current suffering of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at Kituku camp in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), reminds the humanitarian community that rudimentary shelter designed and constructed in an ad-hoc manner will not meet beneficiaries' needs. The humanitarian community must more forcefully apply Sphere Project and other relevant guidelines for substantive shelter programs in a rapid-onset complex emergency.

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In response to a participant's question about USAID/OFDA's interaction with the U.S. military in the aftermath of Hurricane Nargis in Burma, Mr. Setchell noted that due in part to belated communication between USAID/OFDA and the U.S. military, inappropriate and unnecessarily expensive emergency relief supplies entered the aid pipeline, including 5,000 plastic sheets roughly equivalent to shower curtains that were unsuitable as part of a shelter response. USAID/OFDA is attempting to help the U.S. military recognize a possible division of labor when both organizations are involved in disaster relief. This division of labor would place logistical responsibilities with the U.S. military, if needed, and USAID/OFDA assuming responsibility for assessing and validating humanitarian needs, along with developing strategies in concert with other humanitarian actors.

Responding to a question about the difficulties of coordination, Mr. Setchell remarked that USAID/OFDA is often encouraged to act quickly, even when further assessment and dialogue is necessary to ensure appropriate assistance. In addition, the conflict in Georgia provided an illustrative example of host government reluctance to recognize that the international humanitarian community can provide valuable expertise and advice.

In response to a question about investor-based funding for rebuilding housing stock using local labor and local architectural traditions, Mr. Setchell stated that USAID/OFDA has been designing and supporting such programs for some time, but the programs are not funded by the private sector. In recent years, USAID/OFDA has attempted to move the shelter sector's focus from distribution of plastic sheeting to intentionally designing and constructing emergency shelters that facilitate and support economic recovery and reconstruction, i.e., transitional shelter. The current challenge is determining exactly how

such shelters will help local populations transition. At present, the humanitarian community offers mass-volume, low-cost *response* interventions. However, disaster victims also need mass-volume, low-cost *reconstruction* interventions. The humanitarian community should engage development and reconstruction authorities to ensure seamless transitions.

In recent years, the humanitarian community has helped build appropriate shelters following disasters, such as the 2006 Indonesia earthquake, but has engaged little in programs designed to use those shelters as a base for longer-term reconstruction. One participant noted that in Pakistan, Habitat for Humanity has attempted to utilize both microfinance and DRR as part of an integrated reconstruction strategy.

Emerging Issues and Activities

Mr. Setchell reiterated that shelter is foundational, not only to humanitarian assistance, but also to development. For example, the current economic recession in the U.S. is fueled in large part by housing sector problems. In the United States, the recent Housing First (HF) initiative serves as an example of how the humanitarian community might adapt priorities. The initiative reverses traditional domestic homelessness programming by providing a home *__first__*, and then tackling other problems, such as addiction, poor health, and unemployment. People need a platform upon which to build economic and personal recoveries. The basic assumption of the HF initiative, then, is that shelter assistance is foundational to other forms of support.

In the international disaster context, implementing partners (IPs) should not view shelter merely as plastic sheeting or emergency relief supplies. Without framing material and context-specific design, the provision of plastic sheets alone provides little benefit to internally displaced persons (IDPs). Further, IPs should view shelter assistance as fundamental and foundational to other forms of assistance.

Mr. Setchell noted that because each relief agency often has its own shelter methodology and means of assessment, the humanitarian community sometimes has difficulty agreeing on definitions. For instance, following a flood in Ghana years ago, initial reports of 86,000 houses destroyed by floods turned out to be fewer than 2,800. The discrepancy was due to methodological and definitional errors compounded several times over. In such situations, contextual knowledge is important, and basic questions such as, "What's a house?" become critically important.

With definitions being critically important to effective assessment and programming, USAID/OFDA's new proposal guidelines attempt to provide additional clarity on relevant definitions. With regard to shelter and settlements, for example, some organizations sometimes have difficulty distinguishing between a house and a household. The Sphere guidelines have been in place for nearly a decade, but many humanitarian actors still do not recognize that Sphere's minimum shelter requirement of 3.5 square

meters per person is not based on some notion of comfort or amenity, but is a key means of promoting basic health, privacy, protection, and human dignity.

Mr. Setchell reminded participants that the humanitarian community is already playing catch-up from the moment disaster strikes. Early recovery begins immediately. When possible, disaster victims attempt to incrementally rebuild immediately after the disaster is over, and need the humanitarian community's support, even if aid agencies typically do not start responses for three or four days, and often do not start funded programs for weeks afterwards. For example, successful debris removal, recycling, and disposal not only facilitate reconstruction by clearing and preparing land for rebuilding, but also provide jobs. Shelter can thus serve as a platform for production and economic recovery even before occupancy.

Shelter design should be context-specific and utilize local best practices. In Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, USAID/OFDA found that incorporating DRR into shelter designs featuring local materials could reduce construction costs by 18 percent per square meter. In addition, the Sichuan earthquake in China has helped renew interest in promoting the incorporation of DRR into shelter design.

In recent years, USAID/OFDA has learned and re-learned several key lessons, all of which stress the importance of context and market assessments and the foundational nature of shelter to response and recovery. First, the humanitarian community can never start focusing on shelter too early. Disaster survivors who are displaced wish to return to their homes and resume their lives as soon as possible. Second, adopting a multi-sectoral S&S approach provides the best means for the humanitarian community to link shelter, DRR, health, livelihood, and protection issues. Third, because shelter provision can help stimulate the incremental housing development process, the humanitarian community should focus on and facilitate that process. Fourth, settlements planning related to facilitating this process is an important humanitarian activity. The humanitarian community must be more sensitive to the parameters of physical space and consider cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and how shelters fit with one another. Given the increasingly urban nature of post-disaster shelter and settlements programming, such as the camp cities of Darfur, the humanitarian community must be attuned to the spatial components of shelter programs.

Recent sectoral trends include an increased incidence of "vertical camps" (high-rise buildings in urban settings); increased scrutiny from the media; increased involvement by host governments; increased involvement of the U.S. military; more multi-sectoral, settlements-based responses that move beyond four-walls-and-a-roof definitions; and the recognition that transitional shelter programming may evolve into spontaneous and non-USG activities.

USAID/OFDA will strive to include shelter and settlements in initial strategy-making and responses, and will work with donors and field cluster leads to do likewise. In addition, USAID/OFDA will increase training and outreach.

Review of New USAID/OFDA Shelter and Settlements Proposal Guidelines

USAID/OFDA's updated guidelines for unsolicited proposals and reporting, released in October 2008, represent a relatively small change from 2006, when the guidelines underwent a significant revision. The guidelines are available at:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/pdf/updated_guidelines_unsolicited_proposals_reporting.pdf

USAID/OFDA now requires three indicators per sector, so as to better track funding. For S&S, the key indicator is the link of proposed activities to Sphere Project and USAID/OFDA Field Operations Guide (FOG) standards.

While discussing the Additional Program Description Requirements (APDRs), available at pp. 47-123 of the new, 151-page USAID/OFDA proposal guidelines, Mr. Setchell stressed that USAID/OFDA expects proposals to demonstrate a contextual knowledge. With specific regard to the APDRs for S&S, which appear at pp. 112-118 of the new guidelines, contextual knowledge would include an understanding of damage profiles and needs. Proposals must also demonstrate knowledge of conditions in both the housing and non-housing components of the building stock of how local housing is built, and of shelter opportunity surveys that assess parcel utilization, rates of occupancy, and capacity. Proposals should also outline DRR needs and link shelter to settlements issues. Mr. Setchell noted that a surprising number of proposals ignore the risks to which people have newly been exposed, proposing, for instance, non-flood-resistant shelter in the aftermath of a flood.

Proposals must also demonstrate how the project will respond to context by including bills of quantity, detailed costs, technical descriptions of the production process, and sketches. Without this process information, USAID/OFDA cannot properly assess S&S proposals. USAID/OFDA seeks to be responsive and recognizes the steps organizations must take to get proposals approved. Again, to expedite the process, USAID/OFDA strongly encourages partners to demonstrate contextual knowledge, as discussed in the S&S section of the APDRs.

In addition, proposals should not overlook hosting possibilities, whereby displaced populations are hosted in the homes of family, friends, and neighbors, sometimes for extended periods of time. Unfortunately, hosting possibilities are often ignored when assessing needs and identifying potential shelter interventions. Hosting is self-selecting, social, and familial in many countries, and tends to be effective if supported.

Mr. Setchell discussed the indicators on pp. 115-117 in further detail. The first two require partners to consider local context and markets and indicate how much of the

population will be assisted. The third indicator requires partners to demonstrate what percentage of the project funds will be spent in the local economy as a means of gauging project economic impact.

For alphabetical purposes, the Camp Design and Management sub-sector appears first, on p. 114, although this sub-sector accounts for only a small fraction of USAID/OFDA's budget. The APDRs' primary emphasis is on the Emergency and Transitional Shelter, followed by the Shelter Hazard Mitigation sub-sector.

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In response to questions, Mr. Setchell stressed the importance of USAID/OFDA being able to demonstrate to Congress and others that USAID/OFDA-funded projects have directly impacted local markets and economies. In addition, USAID/OFDA's spending on shelter can precipitate shelter improvements by local families equal to or exceeding the value of the shelter provided. USAID/OFDA therefore aims to track not just direct impact, but also indirect impact.

Ms. Poteat noted that the international humanitarian community must challenge itself to support individuals and families that lose homes to complex emergencies as much as individuals and families affected by natural disasters. Following concurring comments from participants regarding the need for more focus on transitional shelter during a complex emergency, Mr. Setchell noted that while the guidelines may seem focused on natural disasters rather than complex emergencies, the two types of disasters are now increasingly linked. For instance, following the Goma volcano eruption in the DRC in 2002, the humanitarian community had to consider both complex emergency and natural disaster conditions. The initial plan put forth by the humanitarian community to shelter many city residents in the countryside west of the city was rejected after USAID/OFDA and others noted the insecurity in the western countryside, as well as volcanic hazards.

Mr. Setchell remarked that rapid-onset natural disasters attract more media attention, often making it strategically difficult to argue for more assistance to complex emergency victims. However, conducting market assessments, identifying needs, considering hosting programs, and engaging in multi-sectoral programming all remain applicable to complex emergency responses.

In response to questions, Mr. Setchell noted that shelter's symbolic importance is often overlooked. Erecting tents sends a political message about an organization's priorities, as does building more durable settlements. The humanitarian community should remain cognizant of the symbolism in complex emergency shelter responses and attuned to political nuances.

Mr. Setchell stressed the importance of using the basic Sphere shelter metric of 3.5 square meters per person, equal to approximately 37 square feet, about equal to the area of a small child's bed. Again, the metric is based not on comfort, but on minimal adequacy to promote health, privacy, and human dignity.

Unlike the minimum requirements of other humanitarian sectors, which reflect levels of service higher than pre-event conditions, the minimum shelter requirement is, on average, _**LESS**_ than pre-event conditions. Specifically, the metric of 3.5 square meters per person is only about 40 percent of what the World Bank has identified as an average living space per capita in developing countries. Further, the metric is less than the 5.0 square meters per person criterion that U.N. Habitat uses to define "slum" living. By comparison, the metric is only about twice the size of a typical sleeping mat. Implementing partners thus have a limited basis for designing proposals that do not meet the most basic minimal requirement of 3.5 square meters per person.

Mr. Setchell also noted that the sector's goal should not be shelter completion, but shelter occupancy.

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Participants welcomed the guidelines' greater focus on transitional shelter, and thanked USAID/OFDA for soliciting implementing partners' opinions. Ms. Poteat noted that the new guidelines provide far more helpful, specific metrics than earlier guidelines. However, participants voiced concerns that the new guidelines might be too prescriptive. Participants also noted that USAID/OFDA's guidelines might differ from those of other donors, thus increasing partners' workloads when submitting proposals to a variety of donors.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Mr. Setchell outlined current and foreseeable USAID/OFDA S&S efforts, including reliance on local materials and markets; emphasis on Sphere and FOG guidelines; linking shelter to livelihoods; incorporating DRR into project designs; and research and development. New technologies such as solar-powered lamps, for example, could help spur direct and indirect livelihood regeneration and provide better protection and safety for disaster-affected populations due to lower fire risk, as well as logistical savings.

Another potential area of exploration is remittances. Of the $93 billion (and probably more) that expatriate communities send home each year from the United States alone, recipients utilize up to half for housing purchase and repair. Remittances thus generate both shelter and livelihoods. In addition, remittances are countercyclical, increasing after a disaster or conflict. In post-war Kosovo, for instance, remittances funded 60 percent of initial housing rebuilding efforts. The humanitarian community should study remittance flows, since remittances can be used to support both hazard and conflict mitigation.

The shelter community can take several possible next steps. First, creating an e-scrapbook for better shelter practice would help develop some common views of appropriate shelter, including templates and shop drawings. Second, the development of a North American S&S network would create a venue for training and a forum for

discussion, evaluation, research, and expertise development, as well as a common voice. Third, an urban-based humanitarian assistance workshop in spring 2009 will explore the implications of urbanization for IDPs and refugees, including discussion of vertical camps and aging infrastructure. Fourth, USAID/OFDA will seek to strengthen in-house shelter and settlements and DRR capacity, commensurate with USAID/OFDA's increased focus on the topics.

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Participants discussed some organizations' lack of technical capacity, the need to endow expertise and resources to focus increasingly on urban settings, the problems for U.S.-based partners arising from the location of most global shelter cluster discussions taking place in Europe, and the cluster's organizational dysfunction. In discussing USAID/OFDA's interaction with the cluster approach, Mr. Setchell noted that shelter is the sector that has experienced the greatest organizational change. In other sectors, the lead agency before adoption of the cluster approach generally remained the lead afterwards. In the shelter sector, however, which has no single lead agency, lead organizations have different interests and commitments, expertise dissipates, sector-wide protocols are limited and camp management, which seeks to manage a settlement form, is often not incorporated into shelter discussions, generating the potential for distortions in strategy.

Mr. Setchell thanked attendees for participating and hoped participants would keep in touch with USAID/OFDA and one another.

Appendix A - Opening Remarks: 2008 S&S Participatory Workshop

"AND WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN"

Charles A. Setchell
Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor,
Technical Assistance Group (TAG), USAID/OFDA

*Introductory Remarks Presented at the USAID/OFDA-
InterAction Workshop, "Shelter and Settlements Year in
Review: A Participatory Workshop," 19 November 2008*

Greetings and Good Morning, on what appears to be a very good day to stay inside.

On behalf of both InterAction and USAID/OFDA, I'd like to welcome you to a very informal workshop to discuss shelter and settlements activities over the past year, emerging issues and activities, and a quick review of our new proposal guidelines. This is the third such gathering since our much larger workshop, "Gaining a Sense of the Sector," in September 2006 (plastic sheeting, timber, and now S&S).

Thank you for signing up, and expressing your interest in shelter and settlements. We thought we might get 15-20 senior programming staff and shelter advisors to show up to discuss shelter sector issues, and only after multiple threats, so we're quite gratified with the turnout.

In addition, thanks in advance for participating this morning, and engaging in an effort to improve shelter practice.

Linda Poteat and I were having an all too rare lunch together recently, and she mentioned that several NGOs had inquired on when we might be having another workshop, and that she thought it was a good idea to co-host the next one, so thanks to those NGOs for being so proactive.

A special thanks goes to both Linda and Jillian Robbins of InterAction, for help in organizing the workshop, and an advance thank you to Johs Pierce of our Information Support Unit (ISU), who has agreed to take notes today so that we can post a workshop summary on the web. While there is no need for attribution of what is said here this morning, please say it loud and clear when you do speak so that Johs can capture what you say.

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In the short time we have this morning, I'd like to travel from the forest, to the trees, to the weeds, and even into the dirt. Such a trek may seem too ambitious to some, and it probably is, but there's an awful lot to discuss. And it's a good time to do so, given that we are in the midst of a rapid transition to a New Administration, which has already expressed the need for a new foreign assistance agenda and new foreign assistance institutions.

I'd like to first review recent USAID/OFDA-funded "S&S" activities over the past year or so, including responses in Peru, Bangladesh, China, Burma, Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Georgia, and -- currently -- Pakistan. One conceptual and operational question common to all of these responses, and several others, is the most fundamental one of all:

What's a shelter?

Others include:

- How do we define it?
- When do we know we're done providing it?, and
- How can we link what we provide to what follows?

These questions seem oh so simplistic, but can be quite a challenge, if recent field work is a guide.

Unlike the first session, our second session, after the coffee and tea break, will focus on current and possible future items. The session, called "Emerging Issues and Activities," will include discussion of such issues as shelter as a foundational "HA" activity, urban-based responses, the role of Sphere, the role of DOD, the "Transition to what?", development of an E-scrapbook of Better Shelter Practice, and the creation -- finally! -- of a North American Shelter and Settlements Network.

Our third session will be devoted to a review of our new proposal guidelines, more specifically to the "APDRs," or Additional Program Description Requirements, for shelter and settlements that challenge potential Implementing Partners to think of shelter as more than four walls and a roof, to demonstrate some detailed understanding of context, to design to context where possible and appropriate, and link the dominant social/cultural character of shelter to a view of shelter as a production platform for economic recovery and learning template for DRR -- and thus sustainability.

Our final, and brief, wrap-up session will likely not serve as the forum for the resolution of anything we'll discuss, but might serve as the first of many "next steps" in helping chart a course for further engagement in humanitarian shelter and settlements activities.

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Any questions? Comments?

With that as a start, then, let's turn to our first session...

Appendix B - Agenda: 2008 S&S Participatory Workshop

Shelter and Settlements Year in Review: A Participatory Workshop

National Press Building (NPB), 7th Floor
529 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20045

19 November 2008

Co-hosting Organizations: InterAction and USAID/OFDA
Coordinators: Linda Poteat (IA) and Charles A. Setchell (OFDA)

Agenda:

8:30 - 9:00   Check-in, Coffee/tea, and Chatting

9:00 - 9:15   Welcome, Agenda, and Housekeeping

9:15 - 10:00   Review of USAID/OFDA-funded "S&S" Projects

(e.g., Peru, Bangladesh, China, Burma, Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Georgia, and Pakistan)

10:00 - 10:15   Coffee/tea

10:15 - 11:00   Emerging Issues and Activities

(e.g., Shelter as Foundational "HA" Activity. Urban-based responses. Role of Sphere. Role of DOD. Transition to what? E-scrapbook of Better Shelter Practice. Creation of North American shelter and Settlements Network)

11:00 - 11:45   Review of New USAID/OFDA S&S Proposal Guidelines

11:45 - 12:00   Wrap-up

Appendix C - Post-crisis, long term shelter response is vital
(Habitat Debate Article, December 2006)

Post-crisis, long-term shelter response is vital

Failure to deal with the long-term aftermath of a disaster and bring development thinking into the humanitarian response at the outset usually leads to further trouble, argues **Charles A. Setchell**, *a Shelter, Settlements, and Hazard Mitigation Advisor with the USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA).*

In the 1989 movie, Dead Poets Society, a teacher played by Robin Williams challenged his students with carpe diem, a Latin phrase commonly translated as "seize the day." Although the phrase is heard to this day, few will recall that the teacher lost his job because he didn't consider the long-term implications of his actions.

The teacher's fate in the movie is not all that different from many humanitarian shelter responses: Not thinking long-term when acting short-term – or more specifically, not informing relief actions with developmental thinking – can get you into big trouble.

So how long is the long in the long-term? In a related vein, and given recent changes in the humanitarian community organizational landscape, how early is the early in early recovery? When do we start long and early?

Based on innumerable discussions I've had with people directly affected by disaster or crisis, often while standing amidst the rubble of their destroyed homes, the response would likely be now, tomorrow, or perhaps even yesterday.

No organization can be that responsive, of course. But a well-conceived recovery programme that links relief and reconstruction activities can have beneficial outcomes – or, at least, minimal harm – at significant scale to affected populations in the four- to eight-month time-frame common to most humanitarian shelter programmes.

Whether done well or not, and whether done knowingly or not, humanitarian assistance also initiates a much more complex process of addressing the need for shelter in a developmental context. This context features largely urban-based growth occurring on a massive scale well into the future, primarily in developing countries. Those engaged in humanitarian shelter, then, would be wise to know of this interplay of action, process, and context.

Alas, we will have to craft our own story, with shelter the main character.

This is not a trivial matter, for it is not an understatement to claim that many recent conflicts have had their genesis in unresolved resource, social, and political issues. It is also not an understatement to claim that many recent disasters have had their genesis in development policies that have placed -- and continue to place -- people in harm's way. One way of refuting these claims is changing humanitarian shelter assistance so that it more effectively contributes to, indeed jump-starts, efforts to address these larger development issues.

Ian Davis provides us with guidance in this regard, and has done so quite clearly in his brief article. Additions to his list of self-evident truths could include the potential of shelter as a significant livelihood generator, and recognizing and learning more about the scale and mechanisms of remittance-driven shelter financed by affected populations.

These truths, together with some presented by Davis, suggest strongly that shelter assistance should focus less on "four-walls-and-a-roof" approaches, and more on the institutional require-ments and strategic vision needed to promote a settlements-based approach to guide delivery of shelter at scale. Such a focus will require concerted humanitarian community engagement with development community actors so that long-term shelter strategies reduce the risk of future conflict and disaster.

Two truths mentioned by Davis, namely transitional shelter and "building back better," merit further elaboration. Recent experience in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere suggests that transitional shelter – emergency shelter that designed intentionally to jump-start recovery and reconstruction – appears a useful means of addressing short-term needs within a long-term framework, perhaps because it reflects the following:

- **Respect for the Past.** A common feature of transitional shelter is the emphasis on salvaging of building materials for re-use in post-crisis/disaster shelter programs. Davis even calls for a ban on destruction of salvageable building materials, in the name of efficiency. Much more importantly, however, re-use of these materials connects affected populations with the past in a tangible, respectful manner, and

- **Linkage to the Future.** Transitional shelter often requires new inputs, sometime from outside affected regions, to supplement salvaged materials. This merging of new and old materials, together with "building back better" measures, can serve as a model for shelter activity precisely because it links to the incremental, and thus long-term, housing delivery process present in most countries, which must be accessed to achieve meaningful impacts at scale.

"Building back better" is far more than measures to resolve communal violence, or promote seismic mitigation. This form of "thinking long, acting short" is an opportunity to re-acquaint development community actors with crises and disasters, enabling those actors to take measures that reduce vulnerability to hazards, both natural and human-caused, and mitigate the causes of conflict. Whenever and wherever possible, such opportunities should be recognized and exploited with carpe diem zeal. To do otherwise, is to put people back in harm's way.

By the way, no sequel to Dead Poets Society was ever made. We'll never know, then, whether the Williams character would have been able to resume his teaching career after heeding the message of "Think Long, Act Short" reflected above.

Had there been a sequel, and the message heeded, the humanitarian community would have had quite a story to guide its work.

Alas, we will have to craft our own story, with shelter the main character.

- Note: this article reflects solely the views of the author – not USAID or the US Government.

Appendix D - Housing the Homeless
(Washington Post Article, October 2008)

Food for thought, from the home front…

Housing the Homeless

The District goes against tradition, for the better.

Washington Post, Monday, October 20, 2008; page A14

<u>MAYOR ADRIAN M. Fenty</u> *has embarked on a bold program to place homeless persons in permanent housing while providing them with support services. The **<u>District's Housing First initiative is patterned after successful programs in other cities in which the sequence of how services are provided is essentially reversed.</u>** The traditional approach has been to treat the issues that cause homelessness (for instance, drug dependency, mental illness or joblessness) while a person is on the streets; once progress is made, the person moves from the streets to shelters to transitional housing to, one hopes, a permanent home. **<u>Housing First assumes that the homeless will respond best to professional intervention after they are safe and secure in their own housing.</u>***

Since January, the District has placed 380 men in supported housing. These are people who had been living on the streets, sleeping under bridges, bunking in shelters. The city has contracted with nonprofit community groups to visit these men at least once a week and provide medical, employment and other assistance. Given the city's spotty track record in managing the cases of troubled people, there's a legitimate worry about whether they will indeed receive services…

*With winter approaching **[think COLD places like Afghanistan, with low-quality shelter]**, council members are right to be concerned that there are sufficient emergency beds, but the administration has provided convincing evidence that moving the chronically homeless into their own homes frees up shelter space for those needing it temporarily. Another concern is cost, but in other cities **<u>Housing First has saved money by reducing emergency-room costs and repeated shelter stays. Philadelphia, San Francisco and Dallas have reported significant declines in the number of chronically homeless after several years of Housing First</u>**…*

We respond to, and even trying to prevent, *<u>displacement</u>* from homes and communities. It's what we do. Is the "Housing First" approach applicable in places we work?

Appendix E - Multi-Sector Disaster Risk Reduction
(Monday Developments Article, April 2008)

Multi-Sector Disaster Risk Reduction as a Sustainable Development Template: The Bamako Flood Hazard Mitigation Project

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Photo: courtesy of Charles A. Setchell

Bamako, Mali, is perhaps best known as the center of a vibrant music scene. Less well known is that portions of the city haven't flooded in nearly nine years, in part due to a flood hazard mitigation project funded by the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) shortly after the devastating floods of 1999.

That's the good news. The bad news is that precious few know about the project, or how it might serve as a template for sustainable development, which is the subject of this article.

Background

Flash flooding throughout Bamako in August 1999 resulted in death, destruction and significant economic losses for several thousand families. OFDA responded by providing funds to Action Contre La Faim (ACF) for local purchase and distribution of relief supplies to flood victims. Subsequent OFDA analysis of the causes of the flooding resulted in the October 1999 approval of a four-year, $525,000 mitigation project in the city's most affected commune, which was implemented by ACF.

One of the primary causes of flooding in Bamako and cities in many countries is the disposal of refuse in waterways, which compromises the ability of those waterways to safely absorb floodwaters. Efforts to reduce flooding risks are thus linked to improvements in urban service provision (e.g., improved retention, drainage, and refuse collection and disposal), a typically mundane development activity that becomes an extremely useful disaster risk reduction (DRR) tool when linked directly to hazard mitigation.

Project Objectives

The project focused on five objectives:

1. **Watershed management**, including retention strategies (e.g., slip trenches and diversion efforts) and waterway bank restoration;

2. **Refuse removal, collection, and disposal,** including removal of backlogged refuse in waterways, and the establishment of a refuse collection system and landfill operation;

3. **Livelihood generation** related to drainage/retention improvements, refuse collection and disposal, and the initiation of a composting operation;

4. **Public health and sanitation improvement** through enhanced water management, training and awareness raising; and

5. **Decentralization support** to promote democratic governance by engaging local government authorities and project area residents in a process of identifying needs and priorities throughout the project cycle.

Results

In addition to promoting decentralization, other project outcomes included:

1. Restoring channel volume in key project area waterways through the removal of several hundred tons of accumulated refuse and debris, which improved drainage capacity and reduced flood risk;

2. Improving water retention capacity in selected sites throughout the project area by constructing slip trenches (a.k.a., soak pits), thereby reducing both runoff volume and flood vulnerability;

3. Establishing a refuse collection and disposal service through the creation of eight collection routes, each served by a collection team using tractor-trailers, with disposal at a nearby landfill established by ACF. (This service generated numerous livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth, and became self-sustaining, in that collection fees soon more than offset costs.);

4. Garnering the attention of the national government and other donors, which resulted in the project's replication elsewhere;

5. Reducing the incidence of selected water- and mosquito-borne illnesses in the project area by 33-40 percent; and

6. Changing development policy. After the project was completed, USAID/Mali requested that OFDA review its development policies to better reflect DRR concerns. The review remains an excellent example of integrating DRR and development policy, thereby enhancing prospects for sustainability.

Summary

The Bamako project was much more than just reducing flood risk: it demonstrated that such an effort can also be a cost-effective means of promoting several other objectives. At a time of constrained project budgets, the multiple benefits of DRR in Bamako should be recognized, appreciated and considered as a model for DRR programming activities elsewhere. When these activities include public service provision or other inherently developmental efforts they can become templates for the pursuit of the broader objective of sustainable development.

Why Is The Bamako Case Important?

At least two reasons come to mind. First, water-related disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts are not at all trivial. According the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies World Disasters Report 2007, 98.5 percent of the 2.7 billion people affected by natural disasters during the 1997-2006 period and 85 percent of the $788 billion in economic losses during the same period were caused by hydrometeorological events. Given these daunting totals, promoting Bamako-like DRR projects on a wide scale seems more than prudent.

Finally, Bamako also serves as a good example of addressing DRR issues where most human beings now live: in cities. Often located in "harm's way," cities in developing countries are projected to double in population and triple in physical area in the coming years, thereby placing even more people in "harm's way." Thus, the need for multi-sector DRR in urban areas reflecting the multi-faceted character of those places has never been greater.

It seems then that Bamako has a whole lot more to offer the world than good music. ●●○

The views expressed in this article are the personal views of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the United States Agency for International Development.

**Appendix F - Architects aren't ready for an urbanized planet
(Int'l Herald Tribune Article, August 2007)**

Architects aren't ready for an urbanized planet

By Amelia Gentleman
International Herald Tribune, Monday, August 20, 2007

NEW DELHI: The world is racing to the city, and the one group of professionals capable of housing and sheltering the massive human influx to the urban centers - the architects and the planners - freely acknowledge that they are ill-equipped to cope.

This summer, the number of people living in cities exceeded the number living in rural areas for the first time. Of the planet's six billion people, three billion live in cities, of whom one billion live in urban slums. Twenty years from now, the total global population is forecast to increase to eight billion, of whom five billion will be living in cities, two billion of them in slums.

As the demands on the world's planners grow, academics from around the world gathered at a recent conference and expressed great unease about their ability to prepare the next generation of architects to build for this urban future.

"Every year the urban population increases by 80 million, equivalent to the population of Germany," said Lars Reutersward, an architect and director of the global division at UN Habitat, the United Nations department that looks at urban development.

"Within that there will be an increase in slum dwellers the size of Holland and Belgium put together - 35 million - every year. This is a complete disaster, and it doesn't have to happen," he added.

"People are dying in slums every day. It is horrible. We are lacking a sense of urgency; we are not coping with the speed of it."

The United Nations estimates that only 5 percent of the building work under way in the world's expanding cities is actually planned; in many Asian cities, 70 percent of residents are thought to be living in unplanned areas. These are usually the poorest inhabitants, who find themselves in badly built urban sprawls, with poor access to electricity, water and drainage.

In many parts of the world, the problem is worsened by a shortage of competent professionals. There is a stark disconnect between where architects are being trained and where the challenges lie.

"Seventy percent of architects come from the developed world but 70 percent of the work is in the developing word. There is a total mismatch," said Gaétan Siew, president of the International Union of Architects, at the conference on issues of urbanization organized by the Rockefeller Foundation in Italy last month.

"These architects are trained to work in their own country, not in the developing world. There is mobility of architects, but with mobility you can get inappropriate solutions."

The entire continent of Africa has 35,000 trained architects, of whom 25,000 are in Egypt. "Italy alone has three times this number," Siew said. "You can see the magnitude of the problem."

Even the principles guiding the profession's understanding of how cities grow have their origins in the wrong continents, Ananya Roy, a professor in planning at the University of California, Berkeley, explained in a recent paper.

"Much of the urban growth of the 21st century is taking place in the developing world, but many of the theories of how cities function remain rooted in the developed world," she wrote.

The personalities of those entering the profession meant that many were unwilling to get involved in planning cities that work for the poor, Siew said. "A lot of the architects who come into the business want to build monuments; they want to become star architects or rich planners. We have to re-educate them so they realize that they are agents of social change."

"We need to highlight that architecture is not just Frank Gehry and Renzo Piano," Siew added. "It's not just about beautiful houses. It is all about everyday people's lives."

Academics from the United States said many faculties were still using outmoded curriculums ill-suited to the current environment. "We have to reboot dramatically," said Harrison Fraker, dean of the environmental design department of the University of California, Berkeley. "We cannot afford to have two billion people living lives in conditions worse than animals."

Their words were echoed by counterparts from Asia. K.T. Ravindran, the dean of Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture, said urban planning as a profession in India had "fossilized."

"Sixty percent of our cities have no sanitation systems," he said. "We are clearly failing."

Arif Hasan, an academic, architect and planner from Karachi, called the failure to educate a new generation of planners capable of confronting the problems of an urbanized world "a recipe for conflict."

"If the present trends continue," said Hasan, "the rich-poor divide will worsen, evictions will increase and a sense of exclusion will grow stronger, with not only the poor but also the rich living in ghettos, the rich surrounded by armed guards and security systems."

In Asia, architects would have to fight hard to combat the force of the private developers. "Projects have replaced planning," he said.

Solutions, conference delegates said, may lie in revising academic curricula to ensure that planning and architecture students are forced to embrace the needs of the poorest in their thinking. Or in the creation of a Hippocratic oath for planners, obliging them to include the marginalized in every stage of their work. Or even in building a global team of para-architects, made up of professionals willing to devote their retirement to coping with the billions of human beings drifting to the cities.

Others said the answer lay in thinking bigger. "We can't do Mickey Mouse feel-good projects - digging latrines and helping 54 families to get a better toilet. This will not solve the problem," Reutersward of UN Habitat said. "We need to focus on education, on the next generation of decision makers. We need to change minds, not build water pumps."

But there was concern about the ability of universities, traditionally resistant to change, to transform themselves in time. "Another 35,000 arrive in the slums of Brazil every month. You can't wait until Monday to tackle this," Siew said.

Appendix G - "PRE-FAB" Shelter: Some Points to Consider
(USAID, February 2008)

"PRE-FAB" SHELTER: SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

__Direct Cost__. Pre-fabricated ("pre-fab"), or modular, shelter units are typically quite expensive, both in absolute and relative terms (i.e., versus tents or locally-developed designs). As a consequence, it is difficult to purchase in volume as part of a disaster response.

__Indirect Costs__. "Pre-fab" costs typically do not include transport, customs, site and service preparation, and set-up costs. These indirect costs can easily double the overall cost of a pre-fab unit. Customs fees collection and processing, for example, are often quite time-consuming, costly, and highly variable. If "time is money," the cost of delay and uncertainty associated with customs and transport must also be factored into decisions on the use of pre-fab housing.

__Capital Flight__. Pre-fabs are often imported into a disaster area from another country -- and the money needed to pay for the pre-fabs goes in the opposite direction. Rather than benefiting from the investment, the local/regional economy affected by a disaster is robbed of important capital that could circulate within that economy, thereby aiding in the overall resurgence of that economy.

__Economic/Employment Impacts__. Related to the above, the homebuilding industry generates more employment per dollar invested than just about any other economic activity. This is true only if local materials and local labor are used intensively as part of the homebuilding process. Pre-fabs only require minimal inputs of local labor and materials, so the potential to generate local employment -- and local incomes -- is not achieved when compared to locally produced shelter. Quite the contrary: In many cases, specialized labor has to be imported to set up the pre-fab units. If this is the case, most of the income that specialized laborers earn is sent out of the country, again undermining efforts to revitalize the disaster-affected economy.

__Cultural/Social Appropriateness__. Use of pre-fab units negates an extremely important function of shelter: the need for family, community, social, and cultural expression. This is not insignificant. If pre-fabs do not meet these needs, they often are poorly maintained and abandoned at far higher rates than locally-based shelter solutions. This can result in higher management and maintenance costs, and additional costs for replacement shelter.

__Functional Appropriateness__. Given the high per-unit costs, pre-fabs cannot typically be introduced into a disaster area in large numbers. As such, they become a scare resource relative to other shelter solutions, and one that is often perceived as "modern" and superior to more familiar shelter solutions. Scarcity, particularly in a disaster area, can often generate community-level friction/acrimony between those who receive (pre-fabs) and those who don't. This can often result in a range of complex and time-consuming political and social problems, and ultimately delay shelter provision.

If decisions are made to introduce pre-fabs, and where the potential for a "have-have not" situation is great, pre-fabs should _ONLY_ be used for communal purposes (e.g. as health clinics, classrooms, daycare centers, showers/bathrooms, warming facilities, laundry facilities, eating halls, police posts, government offices, etc.), so that ALL community residents have access to a relatively scarce resource.

__Standardization of Output__. Related to the point above is the negative effect that pre-fabs have on standardization. By design, pre-fabs are different from several other forms of emergency shelter. In addition, for reasons noted above, they are not typically the standard form of shelter response. When they are introduced into a disaster area, pre-fabs have the effect of undermining the shelter sector standard of output, which can lead to significant and time-consuming discussions among donors and NGOs even before the "have-have not" effects of differential output reach the community level. This can undermine attempts to coordinate donor and NGO strategy, areas of responsibility, and other activities that require organizational coordination, and lead to further delays in shelter provision.

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14 February 2008

Appendix H - Shelter and Settlements Sector Update
(USAID, May 2008)

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS UPDATE – MAY 2008

SECTOR OVERVIEW

USAID/OFDA is at the forefront of the humanitarian community's shelter and settlements activities, all of which revolve around a common goal: the recovery of the physical places where people live, interact, and often work. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, USAID/OFDA provided more than $18 million in humanitarian shelter assistance and shelter-related risk reduction activities in nearly 20 countries, including Afghanistan, East Timor, Lebanon, Pakistan, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. USAID/OFDA also continues to contribute to the broader shelter and settlements strategic framework within the international humanitarian community.

AFGHANISTAN: SHELTER, BASIC SERVICES, AND URBAN RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

The Kabul Area Shelter and Settlements (KASS) project is the largest recent shelter and settlements project to which USAID/OFDA has provided technical assistance. USAID/OFDA worked closely with USAID/Afghanistan, the Kabul Municipality, and implementing partner CARE to complete the multi-faceted project in October 2007. Working in selected districts of Kabul, USAID/OFDA provided shelter assistance to nearly 3,800 households, as well as latrines, potable water, drainage, gravel roads, livelihood generation projects, and training programs in health, sanitation, protection, and seismic hazard mitigation. The KASS project provides the humanitarian community with the first replicable model for large-scale, urban, and post-disaster shelter and settlement interventions, and is an example of how to address wide-scale urban shelter and service delivery challenges. In FY 2008, USAID/OFDA will build on the KASS experience by supporting a KASS-2 program featuring transitional shelter assistance to approximately 12,400 households in Kabul and assisting all residents in the project areas through the improvement of urban service infrastructure. The KASS-2 program will also feature a two-year capacity building project throughout the Kabul area.

USAID/OFDA supported the construction of this and other seismic-resistant transitional shelters in Kabul (Charles Setchell, USAID).

PERU: BUILDING BACK BETTER AND LEARNING TO LIVE WITH RISK

On August 15, 2007, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Peru, affecting approximately 652,000 people, damaging or destroying a total of 137,000 houses, and causing destruction in coastal and mountainous areas. USAID/OFDA responded with nearly $2.6 million, including $325,000 for shelter and settlements programs and more than 1,100 rolls of plastic sheeting.

In the weeks following the earthquake, the Government of Peru (GOP) established a Fund for the Reconstruction of the South (FORSUR), and announced that reconstruction would begin within three months and end in mid-2008. At USAID/Peru's request, USAID/OFDA returned to Peru in November and December 2007 to meet with FORSUR officials to support the rapid formulation and implementation of a strategic recovery and reconstruction program, including the GOP's provision of $2,000 shelter rebuilding grants to earthquake-affected families. In collaboration with USAID/Peru, other donors, and the GOP, USAID/OFDA designed a seismic hazard awareness and public information program, including

hands-on training in seismic-resistant construction of transitional shelter. Implementing partner CARE will lead the program, which is scheduled to commence in summer 2008.

BANGLADESH: TRANSITIONAL SHELTER AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

On November 15, 2007, Cyclone Sidr hit the coast of Bangladesh, affecting 9 million people and killing more than 3,400 individuals. Community cyclone shelters and effective early warning systems saved thousands of lives, but homes and livelihoods sustained significant damage. According to the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), the cyclone damaged nearly 1.5 million houses.

Although self-recovery efforts and GOB and international assistance were rapid, several factors, including significant damage and extreme poverty, increased the risks for ill-equipped families facing the summer monsoon season and future storms. In close consultation with USAID/Bangladesh, USAID/OFDA allocated approximately $3.5 million to support shelter and settlement activities, including a 2,500-household transitional shelter project implemented by non-governmental partners Catholic Relief Services and Caritas. This project is incorporating the fundamentals of an established shelter design, integrating construction measures to mitigate wind and flood impacts, and providing training for construction engineers to adopt risk-reduction techniques. The project will assist Bangladeshi families to mitigate a myriad of risks.
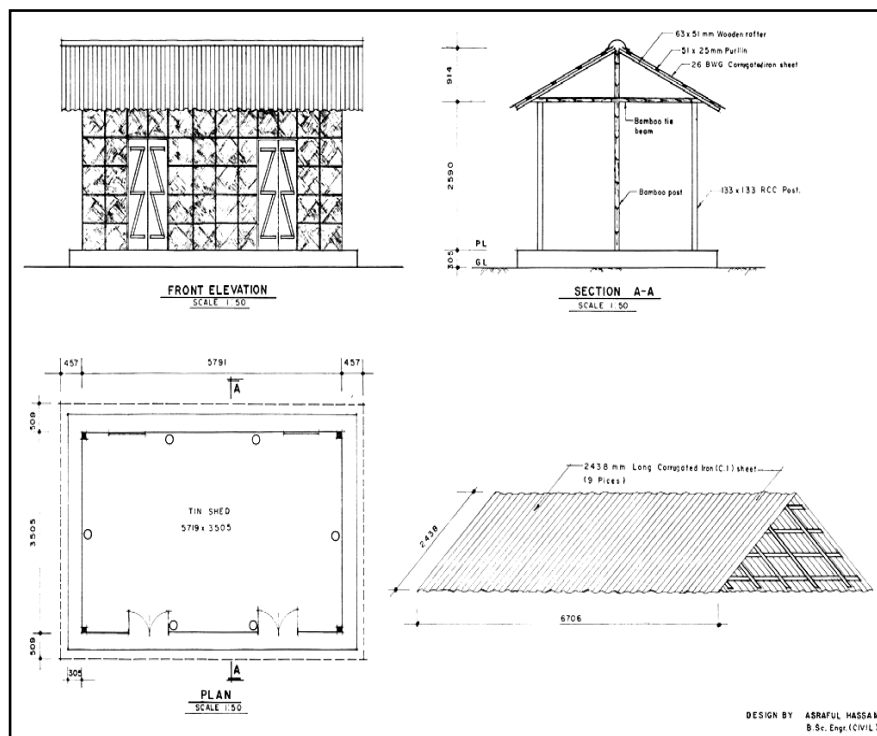
USAID/OFDA partners have revised the above shelter design by the Grameen Bank to mitigate wind and flood impacts (courtesy of Grameen Bank).

UPCOMING SECTOR ACTIVITIES

- On May 21, 2008, USAID/OFDA plans to co-host a workshop on Timber Guidelines Peer Review with the International Federation of the Red Cross, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and InterAction.
- USAID/OFDA is planning to support an upcoming shelter and settlements workshop in fall 2008. The workshop will focus on transitional shelter as a means of bridging the gap between relief and reconstruction; address underlying causes of shelter vulnerability; build greater capacity within the shelter sector through clear guidelines, principles, and information resources; and establish a shelter community that will meet regularly and provide shelter training to interested humanitarian staff.
- USAID/OFDA plans to publish an article on settlement-based disaster risk reduction programs in Bamako, Mali, for InterAction's publication, *Monday Developments*.
- USAID/OFDA anticipates participating in the revision of the Sphere Project Handbook chapter on shelter and settlements.
- USAID/OFDA plans to support an electronic scrapbook on better shelter practice and a shelter and settlements network for humanitarian organizations based in North America.

Appendix I - Thinking Outside the Tent on Tents
(USAID, November 2008)

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TENT ON TENTS:
SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

Tents Are a Poor Shelter Option. Tents are useful when there are absolutely no other shelter options, but this is hardly ever the case, as disasters and conflicts rarely generate complete and total destruction of permanent structures. Assessment of shelter conditions and needs typically results in the identification of hosting activities in homes and community facilities, as well as spontaneous rebuilding efforts featuring salvaging of building materials, which could be supplemented with plastic sheeting, tools, and other inputs. These two shelter responses are cost-effective, socially acceptable, and self-selected options to tents.

Tents Are Too Small. No -- repeat, no -- tent provided by leading humanitarian organizations conforms to Sphere Project guidelines for families of more than four people, and average family sizes are typically larger in nearly all places where OFDA provides assistance. It is more than understandable, then, why people get sick, why protection issues emerge, or why psycho-social issues emerge when they have to live in undersized tents for more than a short period of time.

Tents Are Expensive. Even the most modest of tents typically cost $150-$200, and often much more. Transport and handling costs increase the price further. The total cost of tent provision is often greater than the hosting or salvaged-based options mentioned above, and the investment in tents does not typically generate economic benefits in affected communities, unlike the aforementioned options. Careful consideration of contextual conditions, then, could result in a basis for claiming that cost-effective and economically beneficial options to tents already exist in affected communities.

Tents Are Not Very Flexible. Related to the above claim of limited size, tents promote a "one-size-fits-all" approach to shelter, in contrast to the use of plastic sheeting, salvaged building materials, and other inputs, which can be applied to specific family and site conditions in a flexible manner, thereby resulting in more appropriate and acceptable shelter.

Tents Do Not Make Very Good Shelter. As a general rule, tents used by the humanitarian community are difficult and costly to winterize, hot in warm weather, leaky during rainy weather, difficult to keep clean, hard and potentially hazardous to cook in, do not last very long, and generally lack privacy for occupants. An extreme example of the latter point was found in Burma earlier this year, where authorities forced up to ten unrelated cyclone survivors to occupy tents designed for four, thus generating a range of protection, psycho-social, and gender concerns.

Tents Are Often Spelled C-A-M-P-S. Tents are a core feature of camp development efforts, which are often unnecessary, reflecting rushed judgments on shelter needs, rather than careful assessment of shelter conditions. Only in recent years have tents been widely considered for use in non-camp settings, including on the land of displaced populations. While this is often preferable to camp settings, other options typically exist that would reduce the need for tents.

Tents Retard Recovery and Reconstruction. Recovery begins yesterday for affected populations, and it's often the case that they will start rebuilding their homes, or building new ones, using whatever materials are available, rather than wait for assistance from others. In far too many cases, then, provision of tents is a step backwards on the road to recovery and reconstruction. This retrograde action is not useful, efficient, cost-effective, or appreciated. Again, careful assessment of shelter conditions and needs might identify emergent, spontaneous recovery efforts that could be supported, rather than resort to tents as a default response.

C. Setchell
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7 November 2008

Appendix J - 2008 OFDA Proposal Guidelines: APDRs for Shelter and Settlements

USAID OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

GUIDELINES FOR UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS AND REPORTING

October 2008

10. Shelter and Settlements (S&S)

Background

In many countries, people consider shelter their most important economic asset. It is also critical to both sustaining life and supporting productive activities. Shelter is, therefore, more than just a house: it can also be an office, shop, factory, warehouse, granary, barn, and central feature of all settlements. Ranging in size from the smallest hamlets to the largest megacities, settlements also span a wide range of types, from temporary transit centers to long-established communities. Shelter and related support services are key features of settlements simply because of the economic, social, and cultural importance of shelter, and the fact that shelter and services typically occupy a majority of land in larger settlements.

It is nearly impossible to separate shelter from the larger environmental context. Because the natural hazards and resource issues embedded in that context often generate disasters and conflicts, shelter sector activities can be an excellent means of addressing both natural hazard and resource concerns.

Where possible and appropriate, shelter interventions should support and sustain the arrangements selected by affected populations prior to the arrival of humanitarian actors. The chief means of doing so in many instances is reliance on socially and culturally defined relationships, as reflected in support provided to affected populations by host families. If a disaster-affected household is living with extended family or friends, for example, the applicant could propose to add a needed room.

Camps should be established only after exhaustion of all other shelter options, based on detailed market, damage, and needs assessments. Camps will be sited far from areas of conflict and national borders, and will be designed with consideration to promoting a sense of community, creating recreational spaces and acceptable aesthetics, mitigating economic and environmental impacts on surrounding settlements, and minimizing threats to safety and security, including those arising from tribal, ethnic, and religious tensions.

Shelter will be provided to households unable to self-build, rather than offering assistance through a self-help model. S&S interventions will, as appropriate, promote creation of separate rooms for women and children; inclusion of child-friendly spaces and programs in camps and settlements; and use of building materials and site plans that provide privacy and dignity, for example, addressing the distance between dwellings and the location of public facilities, particularly in cultures where men's and women's activities are markedly separate.

In designing S&S interventions, outputs should be discussed with beneficiaries to confirm they have documented rights, and land tenure issues should be managed to avoid eviction and homelessness. Training and capacity building should include specialized sessions for women and children on non-structural mitigation (e.g., low-cost/no-cost actions designed to reduce risk that do not involve structures, such as watershed management to reduce flooding, clean-up of waterways to better handle flood waters, hazard-based site and settlement planning, and locating and securing objects in

homes and workplaces so they don't fall during earthquakes), as well as evacuation of buildings and settlements during earthquakes, tsunamis, and other natural events.

Information Resources
• *The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response* handbook. Geneva, 2004. Especially Chapter 4, "Minimum Standards in Shelter, Settlements, and Non-Food Items."
http://www.sphereproject.org/content/view/27/84
• *Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response.* USAID/OFDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, 2005.
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/#fog
• *Transitional Settlement Displaced Populations* by Tom Corsellis and Antonella Vitale. University of Cambridge Shelter Project, Oxfam, 2005.
http://www.sheltercentre.org/shelterlibrary/items/pdf/Transitional_Settlement_Displaced_Populations_2005.pdf
• *The Economic Impact of Shelter Assistance in Post-Disaster Settings.* CHF International, 2005. Funded by USAID/OFDA.
http://www.chfinternational.org/files/2136_file_EIES_final.pdf
• *Guidelines for Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment in Disasters* by Charles Kelly. Benfield Hazard Research Center and CARE International, 2005.
http://www.benfieldhrc.org/disaster_studies/rea/rea_guidelines.htm

Justification for Intervention
• Assessments must include analysis of key housing market characteristics in affected areas. A better understanding of pre-disaster housing will provide insights into the numbers and attributes of people living in affected areas, how they live, who builds their housing, how it is built, how long it takes to build a typical unit, what building materials are used, the source and composition of these materials, the availability and cost of local materials, and options available to address both disaster response and mitigation concerns. What are the findings of this analysis, particularly with regard to the need for camps?

• Needs should not be derived or assumed based on damage assessments alone, but also determined through interaction with affected populations. What assessments, surveys, and discussions are informing program design?

• A key objective of any S&S intervention should be the timely provision of shelter that is safe, secure, private, and habitable, as well as the incorporation of any relevant hazard mitigation measures. To achieve this often requires concerted efforts and interactions among donors, NGOs, local and national governments, and affected populations. How are these interwoven demands being addressed?

• How the proposed intervention will coordinate with complementary activities being implemented by other donors and organizations, and with relevant activities in other sectors.

• How the program will conform to internationally recognized guidelines and standards.

• For any proposed shelter, a detailed listing of the resources required to address identified needs, including a bill of materials, detailed costing of listed materials, and

drawings of sufficient scale, number, and quality to convey specifically what is being recommended.

• Definition of important terms, i.e., houses, dwelling units, households, families, homeless, to be used clearly and consistently throughout all documents.

Applications for an extension to a current program must include achievements to date, progress through tracking of indicators from baseline to the end of the existing grant, and a clear rationale for continuing the program, in addition to an explanation of why targets were not met, and how additional time and/or funding would enable implementing partners to achieve the proposed results.

Available Sub-sectors and Sample Activities
Camp Design and Management
• Systems/procedures/activities to improve camp design and function
• Systems/procedures/activities to improve camp management
Emergency/Transitional Shelter
• Provision of shelter materials
• Construction of shelters, rooms, or hosted family accommodations
Shelter Hazard Mitigation
• Training in building techniques and standards
• Training in hazard-resistant construction
• Provision of construction inputs to reduce disaster risk
• Environmental health initiatives
• Salvaging and removing rubble related to shelter provision

Sub-sector: Camp Design and Management

Needs Assessment Summary
• Cause of housing damage and the likelihood it will be repeated in the foreseeable future
• Area affected, for example, a portion of a city, a town or city, several settlements, a region; Physical size of affected settlements, if possible
• How many people lived in the affected area prior to the disaster
• Average number of people in a typical dwelling unit prior to the disaster; How preevent levels may have changed, and why
• Any groups of individuals who did not form typical households or with household sizes considered atypical, such as unaccompanied children or specific minority groups
• Number and percent of households and individuals who sustained damage to their homes
• Approximate number and percent of damaged or destroyed private dwellings, such as single family, attached, low-rise and high-rise multiple family, listed by city, village, or region
• Damage profile, to the extent possible, cataloguing the varying degrees of housing damage from undamaged to destroyed, using OCHA or other recognized damage classification methods
• Number, location, and percent of total households with no shelter or inadequate shelter
• Number of damaged dwellings that are habitable without immediate repair, habitable only after repair, uninhabitable and requiring destruction

• Whether the need for shelter is temporary, such as a few weeks, or whether a displaced population requires shelter for an indeterminate time
• Shelter delivery system prior to the disaster (*see* S&S Justification for Intervention) and relevance to the disaster response
• If relevant, extent of damage to non-housing structures, such as shops and offices, schools, churches, and hospitals, that might serve as potential resources for shelter provision; Access in these structures to sanitation, water, and other basic housing necessities
• Any program-related household and livelihood support activities that typically took place in and around dwelling units *(Not applicable for Camp Design and Management needs assessment.)*
• Percent of dwellings owned by their residents prior to the disaster

Technical Design
• Host country and humanitarian community support for the proposed camp intervention
• Details on proposed camp sites and camp development characteristics, including camp management
• How the program will ensure camp design, development, and management are consistent with recognized humanitarian guidelines
• (*Also see* S&S sub-sector on Emergency/Transitional Shelter.)

Beneficiary Details
• Beneficiaries and selection criteria
• Extent to which assessments and activities reflect the needs of the most vulnerable, i.e., those located on hazard-prone lands, poor households, squatters, renters, young, elderly, handicapped, and displaced. How men and women in these groups have participated in the design of survey work and damage assessments, and the identification of proposed responses
• How activities will be introduced and conveyed to identified beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable; If self-help is emphasized, for example, how those least able to help themselves will be assisted
• How the program will incorporate livelihood activities and measure impacts on livelihoods
• Any training activities to be conducted, who will be involved, selection criteria, and how effectiveness will be measured
• Opportunities and constraints posed by current patterns of land ownership, land usage, drainage, and sanitation, and the availability of vacant and underutilized land

Indicators (required)
• Number of households receiving shelter in camps, pursuant to Sphere standards and FOG guidelines.
• Percent of total affected population receiving shelter assistance in camps
• Total USD amount and percent of approved project budget for camps spent in the affected local economy

Sub-sector: Emergency/Transitional Shelter

Needs Assessment Summary
(See S&S sub-sector on Camp Design/Management)

Technical Design
• Shelter to be provided by the proposed intervention
• Percent of total affected population to receive shelter assistance through this initiative as well as through other humanitarian programs
• How appropriate hazard mitigation measures will be incorporated, and how their effectiveness will be assessed
• How activities will be readily integrated into existing housing markets and settlement systems
• Any constraints posed by the onset of seasonal changes, such as the arrival of winter or monsoon season, which necessitate a more expeditious response
• Government support for the proposed intervention and involvement in program design
• Consultation and coordination on activities, strategies, and plans with NGO and other humanitarian agencies, sector or cluster organizations
• How data will be shared across the humanitarian community for analysis and coordination purposes
• Detailed plan for long-term sustainability. Whether host country authorities, other donors and organizations are willing to accept this program once USAID/OFDA funding ends

Beneficiary Details
(See S&S sub-sector on Camp Design/Management)

Indicators (required)
• Number of households receiving Emergency/Transitional shelter, pursuant to Sphere standards and FOG guidelines
• Percent of total affected population receiving Emergency/Transitional shelter assistance
• Total USD amount and percent of approved project budget for Emergency/Transitional shelter spent in the affected local economy
Note: Transitional shelter is an emergency shelter intervention designed intentionally to jump-start or accelerate longer-term reconstruction. As such, transitional shelter could feature greater reliance on salvaged, permanent building materials as a complement to more conventional emergency shelter inputs like plastic sheeting.

Sub-sector: Shelter Hazard Mitigation

Needs Assessment Summary
• Cause of housing damage and the likelihood it will be repeated in the foreseeable future
• Area affected, for example, a portion of a city, a town or city, several settlements, a region. Physical size of affected settlements, if possible
• How many people lived in the affected area prior to the disaster
• Average number of people in a typical dwelling unit prior to the disaster; How prevent levels may have changed, and why

• Number and percent of households and individuals who sustained damage to their homes
• Percent of housing supply affected
• Damage profile, to the extent possible, cataloguing the varying degrees of housing damage from undamaged to destroyed, using OCHA or other recognized damage classification methods
• Shelter delivery system prior to the disaster (*see* S&S Justification for Intervention) and relevance to the disaster response
• Any program-related household and livelihood support activities that typically took place in and around dwelling units

Technical Design
• Proposed hazard mitigation intervention
• (Also see S&S sub-sector on Emergency/Transitional Shelter)

Beneficiary Details
(*See* S&S sub-sector on Emergency/Transitional Shelter)

Indicators (required)
• Number of shelters incorporating hazard mitigation measures
• Number of settlements adopting hazard mitigation measures
• Number and percent of people retaining shelter hazard mitigation knowledge two months after training